Canada's GLBT Community Magazine

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November 2008

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OUTLOOKS
November 2008
Truly National!

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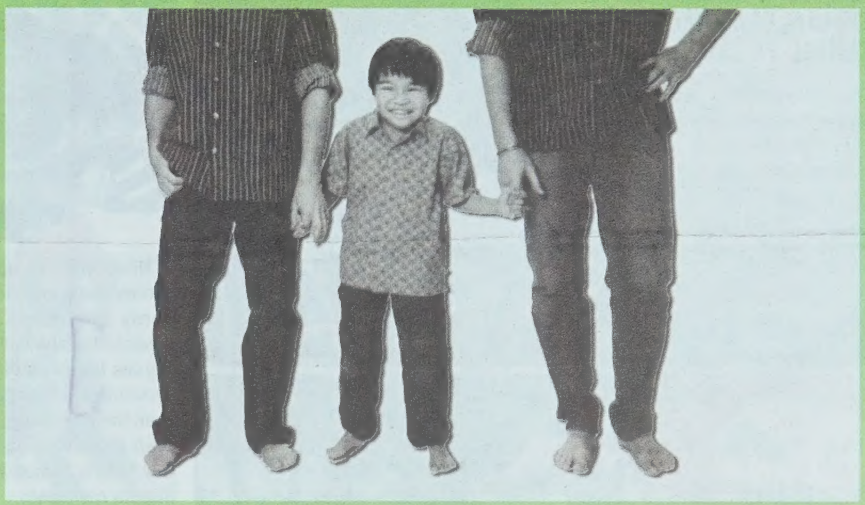

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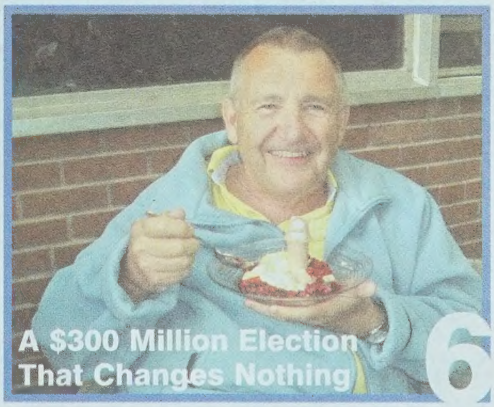

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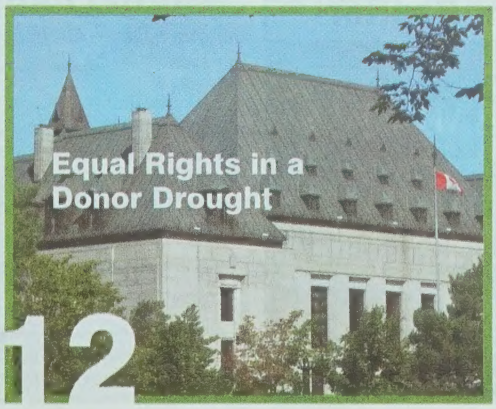

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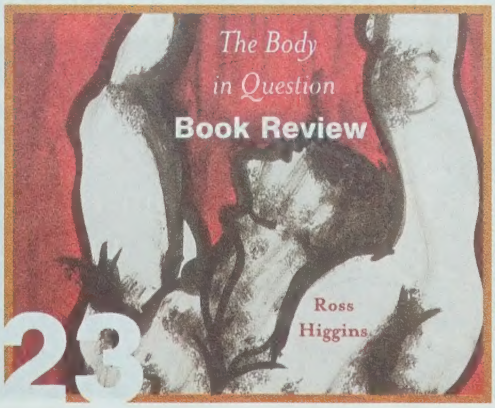

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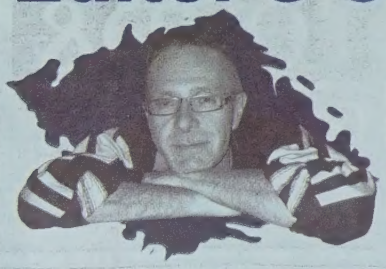
Editor's Column



November is upon us, and with it comes the cooler temperatures, that as hardy Canadians, we have come to expect. For the GLBT community it also signals the beginning of World Aids Day (November 24th to December 1st) and this year, their message is being driven home even more with the launch of Ontario's Gay Men's Sexual Health Alliance's HIV Stigma campaign.

The United Nations estimates, that around the world, about 42 million people have AIDS or are infected with HIV. According to Health Canada, about 50,000 Canadians are infected, with 4,200 new cases appearing each year. Many Canadian AIDS activists say that the epidemic has changed over the last 25 plus years, but the perception that society holds of those affected, has not.

AIDS-related stigma is no different than any other stigma in society. It is meant to alienate and disadvantage a certain segment of our society. AIDS-related stigma simply refers to the prejudice and discrimination directed at people living with the disease, as well as the communities they are associated with.

But, like the Ontario Gay Men's Sexual Health Alliance is doing, we can fight this stigma by helping to change the attitudes and perceptions of others through ongoing education and awareness. The attitudes that need to be changed include those that see HIV/AIDS as a *punishment* for immoral behavior; as a *crime* in relation to the innocent victims and the guilty; or as *fear* in which those affected are demonized. And that's a tall order to be sure, but as a community, we can begin to do our part by simply changing our own negative attitudes and opening our eyes.

Let's say that you are an individual gay man who is HIV-negative because you practice safe sex and only have sex with people that have assured you that they are just like you—so why should you be concerned?

Well, lets see... the Ontario Stigma Campaign shows us that the findings in Ontario demonstrate that discriminating against guys with HIV as sex partners doesn't make you any safer. It is estimated that 17% of men who have sex with other men in Ontario are HIV-positive, and in Toronto, that number escalates to almost 25%. Still feel so safe?

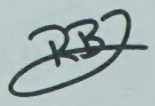
It is the HIV stigma and discrimination that have caused these individuals to go underground and become silent about their disease. We help to perpetuate their silence by making it impossible for them to talk about their HIV status, or HIV in general. Unfortunately, it is also this culture that contributes to the greater risk for HIV transmission in our communities.

And whether we want to admit it or not, all gay men participate in stigmatizing HIV-positive guys when we condone the attitude that "he should have known better" or "he got what he deserved." It is this attitude that promotes unnecessary guilt among those who are newly diagnosed and becomes a good reason for others not to get tested. We must begin to develop positive attitudes where we continue to encourage the practice of safe sex, and at the same time, become willing to support others when they get sick.

Like the Ontario Alliance says, probably the best place to start would be with your friends. Don't assume that you know everything about them—you may not be aware of their HIV status because it's hardly something that comes up in social settings, and if you have touted a negative attitude about guys with HIV, then it definitely won't become a topic.

They believe, as do I, that everyone's first step to helping eliminate the stigma associated with AIDS/HIV begins with becoming aware of what you think and how you talk about guys with HIV when you are around your friends. After all—for all you know—you may be talking to someone who is HIV-positive.

Anyway, that's the way I see it.



Brett Taylor is the Publishing Editor of *Outlooks* Magazine. His 20 plus years in communications, marketing, and public relations includes numerous executive positions within both corporate and government sectors alike.

CORRECTION: The "Four Outrageously Funny Ladies!" article in our October issue was given an incorrect credit and was actually written by Doug Ross. Our apologies for the oversight.

In Loving Memory Of

Tony Liblong

March 18, 1969 - October 15, 2008

"Too Tall Tony" was born in Calgary. He graduated from the University of British Columbia with a Bachelor of Education degree, but for the next fourteen years enjoyed a career at Medtec Marketing Ltd.

Tony was an avid curler and was a member of the Calgary Curling Club.

"Too Tall", when not curling, spent his time as part of the Imperial Sovereign Court of the Chinook Arch (ISCCA) where he was Imperial Grande Duke, Number 21. Through the Court system, Tony made many friends and travelled to events across the country. Locally, Tony was a strong component of the fundraising efforts in support of the ISCCA's many charities.

He enjoyed karaoke and time well spent with friends at The Texas Lounge.

Everyone who knew him will remember his infectious smile and contagious laughter.

You will be missed, my friend.

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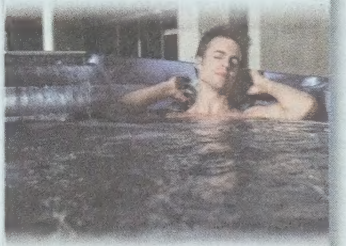

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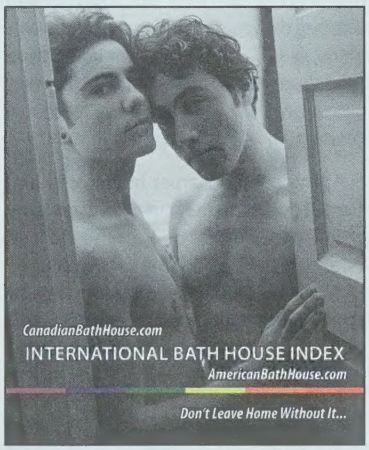

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A $300 Million Election That Changes Nothing

No matter what spin the politicians try to put on it, Canada's 40th federal election October 14th changes nothing and leaves many Canadians wondering what it was all about in the end.

Like a suitor trying to get his bride to the altar and say "I do", Stephen Harper has failed to get his majority or his Canadian bride. The wary woman is possibly OK with this very long engagement (in the absence of any more promising suitors) but she is by no means ready for a full marriage and consummation.

Indeed, she may call the whole thing off if she gets another three or four years of the same grumpy and dysfunctional treatment. After all, just 38 per cent of Canadian voters agreed that Groom Harper was a good matrimonial partner. Hardly a ringing endorsement.

Many Canadians—not just the GLBT community— have an instinctive distrust of Harper and fear he has a hidden right wing agenda which will not be friendly to their interests. Fluffy cardigans to soften his image haven't quite worked. They detect a mailed fist in his velvet glove. Had he got his full majority they fear he would be emboldened and quickly pounce.

Ted Patterson

Behind the smiles they suspect he is really a right wing bully boy with steel-tipped boots. Some of that suspicion shone through in the disparaging ads the party ran to trash Liberal Leader Stephane Dion.

Trying to pass off a second minority Tory government as a clear sign that Canada wants to move forward with the Tories—as Harper claimed on election night— is worse than putting lipstick on a pig.

It's an attempt to add lipstick, designer porcine clothes and a liberal sprinkling of Chanel No. 5. The electorate was not fooled. The party with the most seats is still an unpredictable political pig and voters won't let it completely off the leash. The trust isn't there.

Statistically, the election turnout was just 59 per cent of eligible voters, or around 14 million. Compare that to the 80 per cent who turned out for the 1958 election. Harper and Friends ended up with an extra 17 seats. With an election costing $300 million that works out to $17.4 million per extra seat, so it's little wonder taxpayers are questioning why an election was needed.

The Liberals managed to lose 20 seats, pulling in their worst vote ever...worse even than when John Turner was leading them.

In light of that, Stephane Dion is a dead man walking. The knives are already out and he will not be around for long, whether he goes willingly or is unceremoniously pushed out the window.

Dion came across as exactly what he is—an academic who is on the naïve side and has a total inability to connect with ordinary people struggling to keep their jobs, pay bills and just get by.

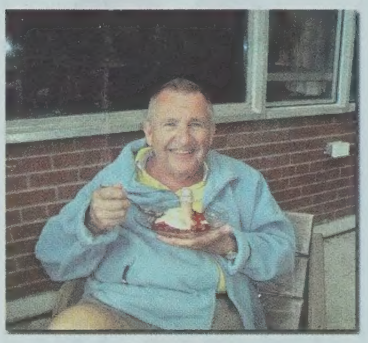
He seemed genuinely shocked that Harper and politicians in other parties got nasty and 'told lies about me'. Welcome to the real world Mr. Dion. All's fair in love, war and politics, but I guess no one told him that.

Being a good liar is always the mark of a successful politician. Remember there are lies, bigger lies and, of course, statistics.

Besides, the Liberal ads also had their share of personality attacks and general whoppers—such as the idea that a carbon tax would be revenue neutral and everyone would end up with more money rather than less. Pigs might fly too, given enough political hot air and spin.

With the world economy reeling and gas and energy prices already higher than most people like, his Green Shift plan had no hope of taking off, especially in the West, which would likely end up as the milch cow for a geographic redistribution of wealth to the East.

The last thing Canadians need is a carbon tax and a total rejigging of the income tax system. The Green Shift was a cup of hemlock which Dion insisted on swallowing—and on forcing Canadians to swallow.



Brent McVean

They didn't buy it and neither did many of Dion's advisers. But he is a stubborn man and pushed on with it anyway.

To be on safe majority ground, Harper needed to harvest at least 155 seats, but he ended up with only 143. The NDP ran a strong campaign but ended up in fourth place as the parties go, well behind the Bloc Quebecois, which picked up fifty seats and two-thirds of the votes in Quebec.

At the outset, Harper began well and was 15 points ahead, but then everything changed and Harper alienated the Quebec vote by slashing arts grants by $45 million—a pittance really—and talking up his youth crime justice plans.

Quebec didn't like it and the Bloc leader immediately capitalized on it, saying the Tories were outsiders who didn't understand Quebec culture. Loose lips Harper set a trap and managed to catch himself.

Support for Harper quickly drained away. He had been sure Quebec would help him get a majority government. In the end the Bloc stymied him and what they have done once they can do again. Canada may be in for a long period of minority governments.

The progressive vote is split not just between the Liberals and NDP. Now the Green Party is also sapping some of the progressive and youth vote and it's highly unlikely the leaders of these parties will stop arguing long enough to form a coalition to oppose the Tories.

No wonder voters are turned off by the whole process and are staying away in droves.

The Liberals are near bankrupt both in money and policy ideas. They have a leadership war looming too, so will be intensely focused on internal navel gazing for the next while, even as the world economy slithers into recession. Besides, given the public mood, no party wants to be responsible for triggering yet another election by defeating Harper.

Remember, this was the third election in four and a half years.

Retired Royal Winnipeg Ballet dancer Ted Patterson lives in downtown Winnipeg and says he would vote Liberal or NDP, but never Conservative.

"Frankly they are not gay friendly and they are defnitely not very friendly to the Arts community as a rule," he says.

Patterson is happy that Harper shot himself in the foot in Quebec by attacking some Arts funding. "His aggressive attitude didn't go over well there and so he isn't getting the majority he hoped for," he adds.

Not everyone in the GLBT community thinks a Harper minority is terrible.

Gay Winnipegger Brent McVean says the government has managed the economy reasonably well in the past couple of years, bringing in tax cuts and watching the bottom line to avoid deficits. Even the IMF has praised Canada's economic soundness.

McVean rightly predicted a minority Tory government and notes that Jack Layton of the NDP was promising to spend huge sums in a time of economic uncertainty. He also notes that Stephane Dion was simply not impressing anyone as a great leader.

Is he worried that a continuing Tory minority will endanger GLBT rights?

"Not really because our rights are protected in law and many people have already been married, so they cannot turn the clock back," he says. "You may run into homophobic MP's in any party, but the laws are here to stay."

Gord McDiarmid

That view isn't shared by business consultant Gordon McDiarmid, a former president of Gio's, the gay community bar in Winnipeg. He notes that right wing regimes such as that of George Bush have ignored human rights and many laws, including the Constitution, as they roll out their right wing agendas.

McDiarmid worries that GLBT youth have grown up with rights they take for granted, as well as "a silver spoon in their mouths". If the economy goes south people tend to become desperate and vote for extreme measures, so he worries about current trends.

So too does Bill Siksay, the B.C. NDP M.P. for Burnaby-Douglas.

He was Canada's first Member of Parliament to be elected to his first term in the House of Commons while already openly gay.

"Sadly, I do fear that a Harper majority could roll back hard won equality rights for our community," he tells me. "The fact is that Conservatives have never supported any measure that positively addressed the situation of our community.... Given that many social conservatives are represented among their MPs and candidates, it's not much of a stretch to believe that we may have fight battles once again."

"Let's not forget either that we had to push the Liberals to get the rights we now enjoy. There are social conservatives in the Liberal caucus too."

Siksay says the Liberals never moved quickly on gay rights:

"Remember their unnecessary referral of the marriage question to the Supreme Court and their decades long delay in adding sexual orientation to the Human Rights Act?"

"Without pressure from New Democrats, we might still be pushing them," he adds.

Ontario Conservative Senator Nancy Ruth has long supported GLBT rights and insists there is no hidden Tory agenda to roll back those hard won victories.

"There is no hidden agenda, there never was," she told me. "That was the Liberals articulating lies when they saw Martin was losing last time. My personal experience of Harper is 'what you see is what you get'.

"He is first and foremost an economist and in these days that's what we want. Harper has always been most respectful of me and the LGBT issues I bring to him—issues like why Canada is giving so much aid to countries like Jamaica which have laws making homosexuality illegal."

Senator Ruth says people should have no fear that GLBT rights are in danger.

"If anything, under Harper, LGBT rights would be expanded not contracted," she says. "We need to remember that the Government is more than just Harper. It isn't a monolith—there is a cabinet team, a caucus. Certainly within cabinet and caucus there are those who are pro LGBT issues and who do not tolerate homophobia."

Longtime Winnipeg GLBT activist Chris Vogel says he doubts the Harper government would dare revisit gay marriage because the fallout would be too great. However he does worry about incremental Conservatism—the idea that Harper will slowly swing Canada to the right, bit by bit.

"He will likely start appointing more conservative judges and their decisions are likely to fit in with his own ideas about what normal family means," he says. "They interpret laws and that may not be good news for our community."

NDP Citizenship and Immigration critic Olivia Chow recently noted the Conservative government is failing to support human rights and justice for gay and lesbians seeking immigration status in Canada.

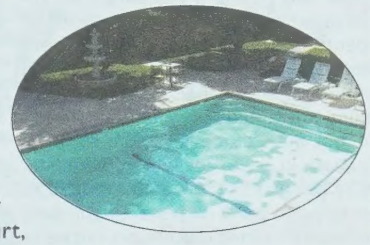
Within the past year, reports have surfaced of failed applicants from Iran, Malaysia, Jordan, Mexico and Nicaragua—all countries that have poor records of defending their LGBT communities. In many cases they even persecute them by law. In Iran and Iraq gays are still executed.

story continued on Page 16

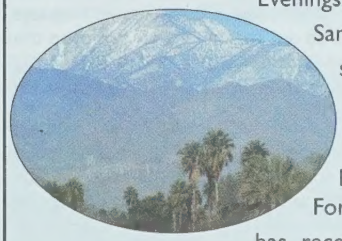
Warm Sands Villas

In 2001 Warm Sands Villas underwent a major ($1 million) renovation to bring life back to this 1930's landmark of Spanish architecture. Today, it's one of the most updated facilities in Palm Springs serving a gay male clientele.

All 27-guest rooms feature complete climate control, king-sized beds and travertine stone floors, wireless internet and direct dial telephones. Kitchens, fireplaces and other upgrades are also available. The staff is consistently recognized for its friendliness, and the hotel was called 'one of the best bargains' in the area. Warm Sands Villas has received the "4 Palms" award from PlanetOut.com for three years running!



Extended continental breakfast is served daily, with juices (fresh from their trees as available), Peet's Coffee direct from San Francisco, Twinings Teas, and a selection of pastries, muffins, yogurt, fruit, cereal, boiled eggs, and waffles.



Evenings, watch the sun set over the scenic San Jacinto mountains, fireside, and enjoy some refreshments. The guest rooms encircle a large courtyard, with 24 hour access to our large swimming pool, hot tub and sunny roof top deck. For those hot and dry days, Warms Sands has recently installed an extensive outdoor misting system throughout the grounds.

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OUTtv's Banner Year

It has been close to two years since OUTtv changed ownership, and things are taking shape. The new management has spent plenty of time bringing the channel back to what it was always intended to be.

"I felt when we bought the channel that it was like buying a restaurant where everyone had food poisoning," says Chief Operating Officer Brad Danks. "There were too many complaints, some of them legitimate, some not. But instead of taking the attitude of "you're all wrong," we took the attitude of "before we invite you back in, we're going to fix the menu, we're going to fix the kitchen, and we're not going to get it all perfect right away because it's all too much to do, but we're going to listen to what you have to say and we're going to respond."

Part of that restructuring was to recapture the value of the Category One licence, which meant steering away from any future adult content—even including that fact in contracts with cable companies—in order to ensure that the channel was branded as a lifestyle channel.

As well, they also hired a strong affiliate relations person to work with the cable companies to ensure that the channel was packaged properly, and to change minds about how valuable it was as a business.

"We never wanted to approach OUTtv as a public service channel that just happens to be there for the community," Danks says. "We've always felt that it should be a vibrant channel that attracts not just the gay and lesbian community but also reaches into the broader community with programming that would be of interest to lots of people."

The next step, and arguably the most important, was to spend money on new programming.

"We bought about 400 hours of programming in the first year and it felt like a drop in the bucket in comparison to what we had to remove," Danks says.

Part of his approach to new program buys was to track what people were watching as opposed to what they told marketing groups wanted.

"What you find oftentimes is when you get into a marketing group or you've asked people what they want to watch, is that they'll tell you what they want to watch and when you make it, they won't watch it," Danks says.

Using what data they could from Nielsen's ratings, but more importantly through tracking hits on the website, the team at OUTtv ended up with a better strategic focus for what they determined was a "destination channel," and they made it easier for the audience by organising their programming accordingly.

Thus was born their themed programming—Man Candy Mondays, Travel Tuesdays, Women on Wednesdays, and so on. The ratings have proven that the new format works, and now they focus is on filling in those nights with new shows.

"We've aggressively gone out and got the shows that we thought were the most important and most authentic to the community," Danks says. "We bought *Queer as Folk* this fall, we went out and bought all episodes of *Bad Girls*—it's the only place you can see it on Canadian television. *Bad Girls* has been hugely successful—it's got phenomenal ratings for us."

But while filling the airwaves with older or imported shows is one thing, producing new shows is another major challenge that the new management at OUTtv has been tackling though their corporate ties with the here! network in the States.

"All of the series that we've been producing, they've been buying the US rights and in some cases the international rights to the series at first instance," Danks says. "This has allowed us to do more series, try and raise the production values of the series, and create more content that's of a higher calibre. We made a number of different types of shows this year because they were interested in a broad section of different things."

Some of these new shows include *Let's Talk Sex* and the séance show *The Afterlife*, both of which have gained good ratings.

"We had a little bit of different stuff so, as a network, we could experiment and see what people were interested in," Danks says.

The relationship with here! is continuing this year with a slate of new original series currently in development, where OUTtv is taking the lead.

"We've been developing them in Vancouver and Toronto. We put lists together of things we're interested in doing. We work with their development of what they like, and then we are producing these as Canadian content shows where we are fully in control of the development. We are developing the shows and then trying to interest both of the U.S. networks to buy them either on a presale or post completed basis, and of course they can afford a lot more than we can, so it really does significantly help."

What helps is their status as an independent, where they can not only do more without corporate interference, but also build relationships with here!'s American rival, Logo, who are also interested in picking up some OUTtv programming, and vice versa.

Advertising is another area that has turned around for the channel.

"Our advertising dollars have gone up in the last year six times what they were the year before, and we expect that it will more than double next year," Danks says, adding that they are becoming a more significant part of the channel's revenue stream.

"The bleeding has stopped now. We have a long way to go before we can say we are truly viable but we are probably ahead of the two U.S. Networks in this regard."

But while Danks credits the CRTC's licensing provisions as part of their success, he and other independent broadcasters are now worried about the recommendations that the CRTC will hand down around the end of October for the future of broadcast regulation in this country.

While their battles with cable giant Shaw continue, there is a fear that they may see greater deregulation under a new Conservative government, given how Shaw has directly appealed to the Prime Minister on their behalf. What that could spell are tougher times for the channel ahead. ▼

By Dale Smith.

Dale is a freelance journalist in Ottawa. His blog is at gallerynotes.blogspot.com.

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Gay Parenting

Noah's Two Dads

Gay dads Jonathan and Holger say that being parents has changed their lives more than being gay.

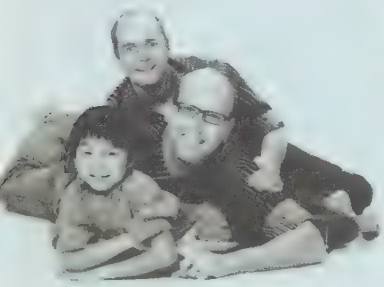
"Almost all of our social life is with heterosexual families," says Jonathan, a former dance teacher turned business owner. "We met almost all of our current friends at the playground in the neighbourhood, (our son) Noah's school or the synagogue."

"We got together with other gay parents a few times through this group called Parents Proud," recalls Holger, a music teacher who works with very young children and their parents. "But they were weird afternoons, very awkward." Eventually, the family stopped going.

Instead, the family's social life revolves around typical hetero family events like the Children's Festival in Calgary, and vacations are planned around places that will hold something of interest to everyone.

Jonathan admits, "We do try to give ourselves some adult time on trips. For example, two years ago, we drove from Calgary to the Mexican border. During our stop in San Francisco, we each took one night out to "see the scene," while the other stayed with Noah."

But the life they had before becoming parents seems like a distant memory.



Jonathan, Holger and Noah

Jonathan and Holger are married and live in Calgary. Their adopted son, Noah, was born in Yunnan Province, China, and is now eight. Jonathan is Jewish-American and Holger is German. Noah is being raised bilingually in both German and English. He is being educated in the Jewish faith and identifies as a Jew; but decorates a Christmas tree each year, complete with real candles as per the German tradition, with Holger. The family celebrates Chinese New Year each year, and Noah has kept his Chinese name as his middle name.

They are the quintessential modern family; their story a testament to the global age.

Allison and Curtis

The story of Curtis and his daughter, Allison, is likely far more familiar to most queer parents.

Curtis is a mental health professional living in Regina, who is currently single. Allison is now 22 and still splits her time between Curtis and her mother, Curtis' former common-law partner, Kathy. They have had a shared parenting arrangement since Allison was just a toddler.

Curtis and Kathy's relationship ended twenty years ago when Curtis came out of the closet. A few years later, Kathy revealed that she was a lesbian.

Despite the coincidence, Curtis isn't sure that he was drawn to Kathy because of their shared secret. "I think that maybe it just worked out that way," he says. "We were colleagues and friends, and things just kind of happened between us."

His friends are a mixture of straight and gay people. In some cases, they are long-time friends and their children number among Allison's friends. In other cases, his friends are the parents of Allison's friends, much like Jonathan and Holger or many opposite sex parents.

Both Curtis and Kathy have had long-term, same-sex relationships—and those partners have played significant roles in Allison's life. But when his first serious relationship ended after seven years, Curtis decided to focus, instead, on his daughter and his work. "I didn't want to have a bunch of partners rotating through her life," he says. "I didn't want her to experience a revolving door."

"It's not like I haven't gone out and had fun," he laughs. "But there have been times when I've had to tell people that I have my daughter for the weekend!"

Adopting Noah

Jonathan and Holger met in Salzburg, Austria, where Jonathan was teaching at the dance conservatory and Holger was a student at a nearby music school. They were a couple for three years and living in Finland when they decided to adopt a child.

"I always knew that I wanted to be a father," recalls Jonathan. "I actually quit my career as a professional dancer to settle down, specifically so that I would be able to begin the adoption process. I would have begun the adoption process had I been single, but was very happy to be part of a couple. "

"Holger was a bit more reluctant, partly because I am older and was ready to make a career change while his was just starting. And secondly, he thought that the adoption would happen quite quickly, not realizing that the process would be long and drawn out."

One of the things that lengthened the process for the couple was that each of them had to adopt Noah separately. Jonathan initially applied to adopt Noah as a single parent. At the time, the policy of the Chinese government was that single men adopted boys and single women adopted girls. China has since outlawed single parent adoptions altogether.

Holger adopted Noah later, after the family had moved to Canada.

Acceptance

Curtis, Jonathan and Holger all report that their extended families have been supportive and accepting. Moreover, none of them have experienced difficulties with schools or health care providers.

Holger attributes that acceptance to the couple's openness. "We are totally secure with it. This is the way we've lived for a long time. It might be more difficult for people who have difficulty with the fact that they're gay. But in our lives, it's just always out there."

Curtis agrees that acceptance seems to come more easily when people aren't surprised. "I was always open about it at parent-teacher interviews, for example. If people are already aware of your situation, things seem to work out all right."

The children's easy acceptance of the situation is another product of their parents' self-confidence.

"Noah is very aware of our relationship," says Jonathan. "He knows that same-sex parents are less common than other parents; but does not seem to realize how unusual it might appear to other people."

"Of course, for Noah, there is no before and after."

Allison also never knew a time when her father wasn't openly gay. Indeed, during much of her childhood, Curtis had a same-sex partner. "I'm not sure that it made a big difference," he says. "She's seen it and been exposed to it all of her life."

Family Traditions

Holger remembers that one of Noah's kindergarten friends had a lot of trouble accepting that Noah has no mother. "He was a very good friend of Noah's and he hung around our house a lot. And the problem wasn't with his parents, who were very accepting of us. He just had trouble understanding how Noah could have no mother."

Noah and his dads have compensated for the absence of a mother figure by creating their own rituals around Mother's Day. The family sits around a table and talk about how thankful they are for Noah's birth mother. They then blow out a candle and Noah makes a wish for his mother over the smoke from that extinguished candle. Then, they open the front door and allow the smoke (and Noah's wish) to be carried away on the wind, the idea being that it will eventually find its way to China.

Noah also makes a Mother's Day card at school for one of his grandmothers instead of his mother. On Father's Day, he comes home with a card meant for two. Jonathan says that all of this is done with the help and support of Noah's teacher.

But perhaps the most poignant example of how Noah and his dads have reconciled tradition with their unconventional family life came during a trip to Richmond two years ago. Holger and Noah went to a Chinese Buddhist temple. "Noah decided he wanted to pray," says Holger. "I told him that Jewish people don't pray here. But he said, well, I'm Chinese, too. And Chinese people pray to Buddha."

story continued on Page 17

Equal Rights in a Donor Drought

Since the victories in the courts and in Parliament over equal marriage, one might expect that the toughest fight of the GLBT community is over with, that EGALE has largely served its purpose, and that with little more than a bit of tinkering left, we can all pretty much go home and enjoy our freedom.

That attitude would be wrong. Nevertheless, a sense of complacency has crept into Canada's GLBT communities, and EGALE is suffering as a result. With a number of fights on its hands and its donations virtually dried up, it's finding it harder to fight court cases than ever before.

"We're still fighting the good fight," says executive director Helen Kennedy. "We're still doing the work, but there is a sort of sense of apathy towards the work since the same-sex marriage campaign. We do a lot with very little, basically."

What kind of work? Kennedy can list off any number off the top of her head: fighting Health Canada regulations regarding blood and organ donation, assessing the Immigration and Review Board decisions regarding cases of gays and lesbians who are denied refugee claims, the Stop Murder Music campaign, the safe schools campaign, putting together a directory of Gay-Straight Alliances around the country, engaging CIDA [Canadian International Development Agency] in terms of foreign aid linked to GLBT human rights, and Charter challenges for gender identity and expression—to name but a few.

"There's a tonne of work going on, volunteer driven," Kennedy says. "We have a very good record in terms of winning our cases, but somebody has to pay for it. We're not getting any money from government, and the corporate world doesn't want to get involved in queer advocacy, so who's going to advance our rights? We're going to have to do it ourselves."

With the cutting of the Court Challenges Program in 2006 by the Conservative government, things have become that much harder for an organisation with a shoestring budget.

"At one point, the legal issues committee would have four or five cases that we would discuss at every meeting," says Hillary Cooke, Chair of EGALE's legal issues committee. "We don't have that luxury anymore. We just have to be incredibly picky as to what we can be involved in."

Some critics, like Conservative Senator Nancy Ruth, feel that EGALE shouldn't have relied on Court Challenges funding, and points to her work with LEAF (Women's Legal Education and Action Fund) as an example.

"We knew even back in Chrétien's time that there was going to be an end to government-funding for equality-seeking groups once the blush of the Charter passed," Ruth says.

"LEAF started an endowment fund," she says. "It's very small and it needs more, but any equality-seeking group that didn't get that twenty years ago was living in la-la land in my opinion."

Ruth also says that there are plenty of lawyers looking to do pro bono work to help make a name for themselves.

But Cooke says that even with the generous amount of pro bono work that has come their way, there are still associated costs that EGALE needs to cover, from photocopying to purchasing court transcripts necessary for appeals claims, all of which come at a high cost that lawyers doing pro bono work won't cover. As well, there is the great expense of getting expert witnesses.

"Even a cut-rate expert witness is expensive," Cooke says. "If the research exists and is exactly targeted to what we need, then you have to pay the witness to prepare some kind of report, then you have to prepare them to testify, and they're going to have to fly in and they're probably not going to stay on the couch of some EGALE member in Ottawa. They're going to have to come in and testify and they're going to have to take time off from wherever they're teaching, and that could easily cost ten thousand dollars. That's a lot of money for us."

Those disbursements must all come from EGALE's coffers.

"It's not big money compared to lawyer's fees, but it's big money for EGALE," Cooke says.

So why aren't people donating?

"Maybe we're not getting the word out," Kennedy suggests. "It's as much our fault in terms of we need to let people know what we're doing as much as anything else."

While Kennedy points to the various virtual means by which EGALE tries to raise their issues, from email blasts to Facebook updates, much in the end boils down to media.

"We need to generate that same sexiness about the other issues that seemed to get generated through the same-sex marriage debate."

Cooke concurs with the sentiment. "Marriage was a great fundraiser, but people aren't necessarily going to give a tonne of money to some of these other matters," she says.

"I think people really need to be a little bit panicked before they start giving money, but the fact is that if we allow some of these things to happen, once they become enshrined in law, it's much harder to get rid of than to deal with it up front, and I think we're a bit in that period now."

As for Senator Ruth's comments, Kennedy throws the challenge back at her.

"If Nancy Ruth wants to step up, being the entrepreneur that she is and the philanthropist that she is, and support some of our work through the courts, I'd be more than happy to take her money," she says. "She understands the issues—she knows. There are very few lawyers that will take on cases with the magnitude of an EGALE Canada case pro bono. I would love a philanthropist like Nancy Ruth to finance a basic human rights for the LGBT community. She could write the cheque of EGALE Canada."

However, with that unlikely to happen, and with the Conservatives re-elected, it becomes incumbent upon the GLBT community to step up and see that EGALE's court challenges are adequately funded.

To donate, go to www.egale.ca ▼

By Dale Smith.

Dale is a freelance journalist in Ottawa. His blog is at gallerynotes.blogspot.com.

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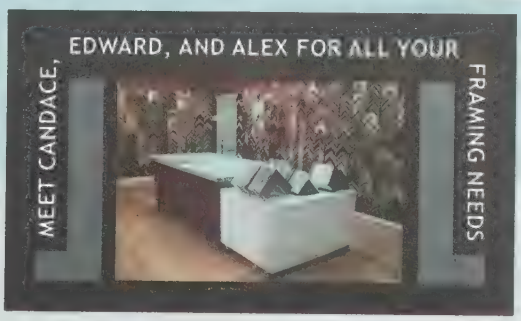

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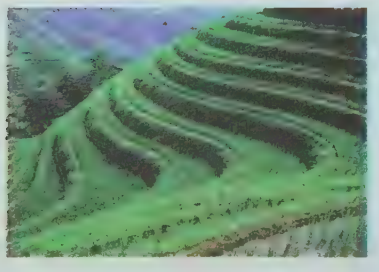
Is Green the new Pink?



Sustainable tourism, responsible travel, eco-tourism and the ever-so popular term "Green Travel". What do these mean, and more importantly why should you care as a gay or lesbian traveller? These are all terms that relate to a way of travel that respects both the environment and the communities and places that we visit. They are terms that are sometimes misused or misunderstood as some companies (& travellers) struggle to define or even redefine who they are and what travel choices they make to preserve our current environment for future generations.

Do you remember when choosing a vacation destination was as simple as asking a travel agent which destinations were gay friendly? Times have changed and with most major operators offering what they call "gay-friendly" trips or resort packages you are faced with many new choices. The current hype is to be green, or as I will refer to it—travel responsibly. This includes the option to carbon offset your flights or perhaps something as simple as reusing the towel and bedding at your hotel. On that note, I can personally attest that 90% of hotels still wash sheets or towels that I choose to reuse. I digress. So, the question is... How green will you choose to travel and how far will the pink dollar force change on airlines, hotels and tour operators?

It's a new world out there and responsible tourism is the only way to ensure that the fragile places that we are fortunate to visit will continue to welcome guests, both gay and straight from around the world. Responsible tourism means travelling in small groups to lessen physical, cultural, and environmental impact. It's about cultural interaction in a respectful manner. It's ensuring that money stays in the communities that we visit by using local currencies rather than the declining USD: staying at locally owned hotels; eating at local restaurants; shopping and support local craftsmen and women. By following these principles we ensure that the amazing places we visit retain their unique character and that the people and cultures that we visit have an opportunity to support their families and their communities. The most enriching experience you will have is that unplanned "ahhhha" moment where you experience and interact with real people, in their real culture. It's the reason you will return to a destination time and again.

Responsible travel is about giving something back to the communities you visit. Today, in the face of a multitude of threats to the environment, our commitment should be stronger than ever. As a traveller, you can try to choose destinations that work to retain their natural character and cultural diversity, such as Costa Rica. This type of character can only be retained if travellers demand such action. Most developing nations rely heavily on tourism to support their local economy, and there-fore they often give way to large resort hotel chains which vastly impact the environment and the local community.

The most important recommendation would be to respect local rules and values. This means different things in different countries so be as informed as possible about the country you visit before you arrive—try to learn some of the local language and read about the religion and culture. This will improve your travelling experience. With a little effort on your part you will find yourself coming away with a greater sense of understanding of other cultures and feeling pleased to have left a positive mark on the country you visited. In places like Egypt or Morocco, it may be difficult to find hotels that will accommodate a king bed for a same sex couple, where most areas of Thailand welcome gay and lesbian couples with open arms. They don't call it the land of smiles for nothing.

The following general recommendations are standards of behaviour that will gain you respect of the local people. Now, the term guideline may sound awfully formal but we must remember that as travellers we are guests and are privileged to be able to visit these communities, homes and places of worship. As responsible travellers, we are ensuring that future travellers can enjoy similar wonderful experiences.

When dealing with local people around the world, you will often encounter local customs that are different from those in North America. Generally, it helps to accept these differences as we often expect mainstream society to accept the LGBT community. Remember that many places operate on different concepts of time—things happen when they happen! The traveller who wishes to have a happy and successful trip should keep as calm, cheerful and friendly as possible. Patience, courtesy and smiles are virtues that open many doors.

Some basic rules or codes of behaviour to remember are as follows:

- In Asian and Muslim countries, showing affection in public is considered quite offensive. Away from the major urban centres it is extremely rare to see couples holding hands. To the contrary it is quite common to see friends of the same sex holding hands in many Asian and Middle Eastern countries.
- When entering mosques in Egypt, Morocco or Turkey it is essential that you take your shoes off and leave them at the entrance. Women are should cover their heads with a headscarf and wear loose fitting, modest clothing. Men also must be sure to wear modest clothing. Long pants and long sleeve shirts are appropriate. Likewise in many European countries, especially Italy, you should keep knees and shoulders covered at all times. That means that all of us boys that love to work on our tan by wearing nothing more than cargo shorts should pack a bit more in our steam trunk!
- In Europe it is customary to enter a store or restaurant and say hello in the local language.
- In most countries it is inappropriate to express anger in a raised voice. Becoming angry is embarrassing to the local people with whom you are dealing—they will not be embarrassed for themselves
- Have fun, and always smile!

Although these "rules" seem quite strict, they will simply help you meet local people and really enjoy a culture.

What is all this talk about carbon offsetting?

All of this carbon talk has been driven by recent climate change around the world which has been defined as one of the most urgent problems of our time. Making a personal commitment to reduce your 'carbon footprint' is a big step in the right direction to achieving a healthier environment. As more of us world travellers choose to take the green road, more international corporations are forced to pave that road with grass rather than asphalt.

May organizations today are hopping on the green wagon by supporting carbon initiatives in one way or another.

carbon offset trip

Specifically in travel, you will notice an option to purchase carbon offsets. What does this mean? To keep it simple, we as a travellers are responsible for carbon emissions that are released into the atmosphere by the cars we drive, the flights we choose and even the hotels we stay in.

When you choose to offset carbon, credits are often purchased on your behalf which are then applied to projects around the world that are dedicated to new energy sources such as wind and solar polar. This could be something as simple as planting trees or projects that are much more complex such as funding assistance for industrial factories to create efficiencies which reduce the carbon that they release.

To conclude—is green the new pink? Don't worry, pink will ALWAYS be pink however green is definitely first runner up when it comes to being a responsible gay or lesbian traveller. In many cases, gays and lesbians set travel trends and lead the way to hot new destinations. The mainstream travel market is beginning to understand just how important LGBT travellers are. In this day and age with economic uncertainty around the world, gays and lesbians are a good bet for tour operators and airlines are looking for a better return on investment.

So, pave the green road for future generations of LGBT travellers by choosing to travel with operators and airlines that have a responsible travel plan in place, and choosing to offset whatever you are able to afford, both at home and abroad. How you travel the world is your choice, but make sure you do your research and ask the hard questions. It is after all your pink dollar that will help affect green change. ▼

So, how can you be a responsible traveller?

- You can choose an operator that practices what they preach. Visit **www.out-adventures.com** or **www.intrepidtravel.com** as they both have complete resource centres and booking engines for tours that respect the environment and culture.
- Use local public transport where possible—minimize demand for special tourist vehicles and fuel... and meet some locals along the way!
- Choose small-scale locally owned accommodation and homestays where available and local restaurants and markets for dining, retaining revenue in local communities. Most gay and lesbian specific accommodation fits into this category.
- Opt out of large group tours and hire a local guide to show you the sights. You will have a much more exciting experience and really get a flavour for the local culture.

By Robert Sharp

Robert is a responsible travel advocate and Co-Founder of OUT Adventures, a Canadian based tour operator specializing in small group adventure travel for the LGBT community.

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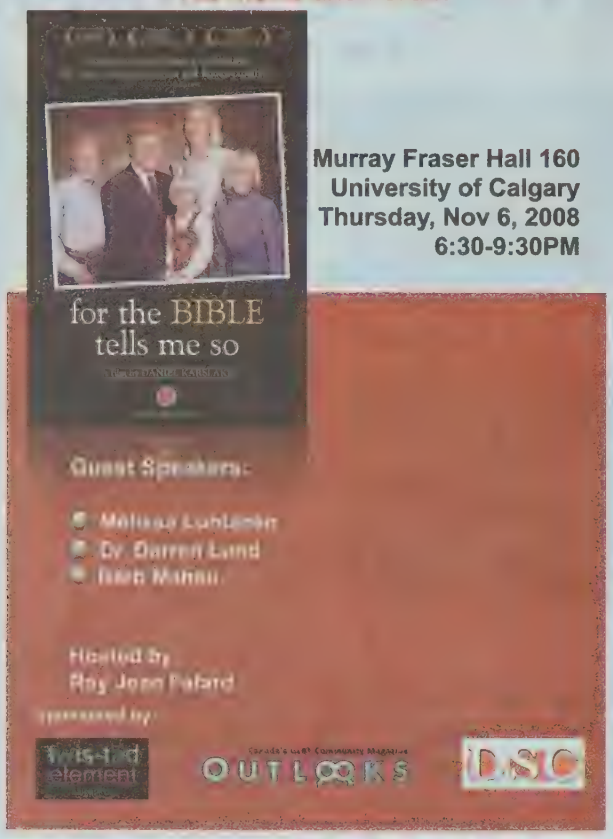

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A $300 Million Election That Changes Nothing *(continued from Page 7)*

"Those who flee human rights abuses at home should expect fairness and justice in Canada," says NDPer Chow. "The Conservative government has failed to put a priority on human rights and equality in the immigration system."

We can likely expect more of the same. In fact Canadian Press recently reported that the Harper government approved 148 appointments to federal boards and agencies—long used as rewards for supporters of the party in power— as the election neared.

Cabinet handed out the posts in three rounds, the first only two days before Parliament recessed for the summer; the second on July 30, at peak holiday time for politicians and political journalists; and the third less than a week before Harper announced the election.

Harper railed against Liberal patronage in the 2006 election but later failed to deliver on a campaign pledge to put an independent commission in charge of vetting cabinet appointments.

Dr. Karen Busby of the law faculty at the University of Manitoba is one of Canada's foremost human rights and gay rights lawyers. She tells Outlooks the government has already damaged the GLBT cause by canceling a legal challenges program which allowed minority groups to fight discrimination cases in the courts.

"All our litigation was funded by that and it's no longer there," she says. "EGALE, which fights for GLBT equality, is impacted and is now down to a staff of less than two. Canada has no real tradition of privately funding advocacy groups like EGALE, as they do in the U.S.A."

All in all, this expensive election has pleased no one.

Stephane Dion is on his way out. Jack Layton isn't prime minister and his party is fourth. The Bloc maintains its knee on Canada's windpipe. The Green Party has no M.P.s. And Stephen Harper remains critical seats short of what he needs to impose his will on Canada.

For now he will focus on the economy and tougher crime legislation. The other parties will hold their collective noses and refuse to vote or tepidly support things they can agree on. It will get nasty.

Harper will try to be cooperative and play nice for a while, but it's unlikely to last. The electorate is disengaged from the whole process and anger and disgust are likely to grow as the economy starts to sour and unemployment rises. We are not immune to the global economic tsunami.

If ever there was a time for a national unity government of all the parties this is probably it, but it won't happen.

The election proved that we have no real leaders with vision combined with common sense and guts. We have spoiled children with their own tiny agendas and raging egos. In Canada statesmen and women seem to be as extinct as the dinosaurs.

If people get the governments they deserve, then it's time we all looked in a mirror and did some serious soul searching.

The future does not look pretty. ▼

By Peter Carlyle-Gordge

Peter Carlyle-Gordge is a Canadian freelance writer who has been a correspondent for Macleans, Time Canada and the National Post. Peter has also written for the Montreal Gazette, Toronto Star and the London Free Press, as well as Reader's Digest, Chatelaine and People Magazine. He is currently Chairman of the Board of Directors – OutWords Inc. in Winnipeg.

Gay Parenting

(continued from Page 11)

"He kneeled in front of one of the statues and prayed for his birth mother. Then he went to another one and prayed for Jonathan, who was staying an extra week in Richmond after us. He made the rounds, praying at each statue for some member of our extended family. Then, while we were leaving, he said that he'd forgotten someone. He wanted to pray for his birth dad, as well."

In Allison's case, the traditions are more conventional but no less important. "She still keeps the same schedule of visits between her mother and me, even now, as an adult, " says Curtis. "It gives her time to connect with both of us."An important ritual in Curtis's family is summers at the family cabin at White Bear. "We hang out with the family, roast hot dogs, take out the boat, go tubing, and set off fireworks." A year or so ago, Curtis broached the subject of selling the cabin with Allison. Her reaction was fierce. "She was totally opposed. For now, at least, the cabin is still very important to her."

Curtis believes that Allison is likely the only child he will ever have. "There was a point in my life when I could have given Allison a brother or sister. But I don't see that happening now."

"Whether she turns out to be gay or straight, though, I do hope she has children. I want to be a grandparent! "

Conclusion

Life isn't so sunny for all queer parents. Many queer parents have distant relationships with their children, or none at all. Others have experienced discrimination at the hands of school officials and health care providers. Many do not enjoy the support of their extended families.

But Jonathan, Holger and Curtis are living proof that queer people can be successful parents. And there are lessons to be drawn form their experience.

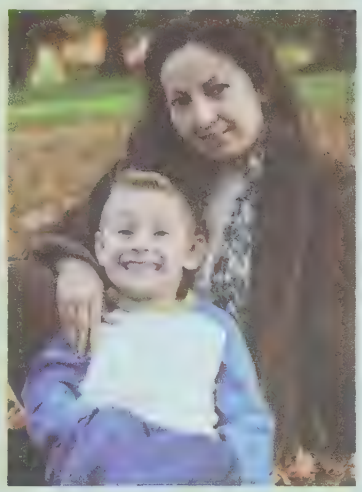
All of them were secure in being gay while they were raising their children, and their acceptance of themselves was reflected in how their children accepted them.

All enjoyed the love and support of their extended families.

All were honest about their families with schools and health care providers.

Finally, like most parents, they decided that being with their children defined their lives more than being gay.

As Jonathan says, "There was never a change to being gay. So, for me, the answer (to the question about what changed my life more) is being a parent."



HOW MANY CHILDREN ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?

The 2006 census reported that there were 45, 345 declared same-sex couples in Canada, half of them living in Toronto, Montreal or Vancouver. The census also reported that only one in six (7,465) same-sex couples are legally married.

Approximately 4,300 same-sex couples (9 percent of the total) told the census that they had at least one child living with them. Just 70 of those couples lived in Saskatchewan, and only ten of those couples were gay male couples, all of them married. Less than 400 same-sex couples raising children lived in Alberta. Nearly 2,000 of these couples lived in Ontario, with most of the rest living in Quebec or British Columbia.

While the majority of same-sex couples in the census were male, lesbian couples were more than four times more likely than gay male couples to report raising children.

These figures do not include single queer parents with a child living with them, queer parents who no longer have custody of their children, or people unwilling to declare that they are part of a same-sex couple.

By Rick Pollard. Rick is a long-time community activist and one of the co-hosts of "Out On the Air", a GLBT program that airs Wednesdays on CJTR community radio in Regina.

re | thinking design

by Robert Reid

The "Jet Set" carries-on ...

With the holiday vacation season approaching and the cost of checking bags increasing, now is a great time to start thinking about where you are headed, what you are taking and how you are going to use to pack it all in! Many travelers are becoming more militant with their packing process and are only taking what they can fit into a carry-on, so be sure you understand what the airline's size limitations are for carry-on baggage, weight restrictions and number of pieces.

Each airline has their own policy for carry-on baggage (size, weight and number of pieces), so it's a good idea to check out their website before packing. Take a look at following links for baggage restrictions:

West Jet www.westjet.com

Air Canada www.aircanada.com

American Airlines www.aa.com

Continental www.continental.com

British Airways www.britishairways.com

Everyone has different priorities of what they want (and need) to bring, so if you don't travel often, start by making a list of what you might want to take with you, edit the list and then pull it all out and lay it out on your bed. With this visual inventory of what makes up your "want list," you may do a couple of edits, to determine your "need list". Once you realize how much you need to bring, give some thought to making items serve double duty—a pair of black pants might work as both a casual and a dressy look, depending on what they are paired with, and you might want to bring a few light shirts, that can be layered together or worn individually. Another great tip is to use all of the available space to store items—accessories (which you may want to limit to a few of your favourite things) and socks can be stuffed into shoes. One of the worst things you can do is pack too much and then not wear half of what you bring (oh...been there, done that).

Considering your specific destination, if you are going to a tropical locale, you may only want to bring one or two dressy shirts, a pair of universal dress-up shoes, a couple of pairs of shorts and a pair of sandals, and pick up a few cheap-o tee-shirts and a disposable pair of flip-flops when you get there, that you can leave behind when you leave. Women can benefit by picking up a simple silk dress or skirt that can be rolled up in a suitcase, and washed out and quickly dried as needed. Keep in mind that jeans, as comfortable as we all find them, are heavy, bulky and difficult to wash and dry while traveling. If you want to take a pair, you may want to wear them on the plane both ways, along with a light jacket... freeing up valuable space in your carry-on.

Business travelers are well served by investing in a lightweight, travel-friendly suit in a conservative color (black, grey or dark blue) that can be matched with various colors of shirts, ties/scarves and shoes. Imagine a five-day trip with a single suit, a couple of shirts, a change of casual clothes, underwear and workout clothing—all in a single carry-on approved bag! Once you get to your destination, you can be out the airport door on your way—and up to $50.00 richer, since you didn't have to pay the "checked-bag" fee!

Finally, by now everyone probably knows the limitations for liquids in your carry-on, so many travelers are choosing to either take the minimums and buy what they need at their destination, sending a package ahead to their hotel with their essentials, or by using a service such as www.minimus.biz, which will have your requested products delivered to your hotel by the time you arrive. Don't think you are limited to just the basic generic manufacturers for air travel friendly containers anymore, either. Big name cosmetics companies like Clinique, Bliss, Philosophy and Sephora, all have small travel-sized bottles available for many of their products, so you don't have to make do with floor-wax quality shampoo and moisturizer anymore.

Of course, after you figure out what to bring on your next trip, you'll have to find a stylish bag in which to carry it all. Whether you select a bag that is purely utilitarian or the latest designer offering, the possibilities are endless. Elsie Petzwinkler, manager of Montréal's "Taschen!" specialty leather goods and luggage store (various locations across Canada) said that men and women are asking for different solutions—women are tending towards small carry-ons that fit under the seat in front of them, so they can avoid having to lift a heavy bag into the overhead bin. Men on the other hand, are looking for the largest bag that can possibly fit into the overhead compartment. She also mentioned that most travelers seem to be aware of the weight restrictions imposed by airlines and are looking for the lightest bag they can find. Her personal favourite is the "U-214" bag from Briggs & Riley.

A few sweet options, any of which I would be happy to carry with me on my next trip are shown.

Regardless of the bag you pick that best suits your needs and your personal style, here are a few hints to keep in mind: the more compartments and zippers you have on your bag, the heavier the bag is empty, let alone when you fill it up. Also, consider how you are going to haul the bag once you get to your destination. Will you have to pull your bag down a cobblestone street in Paris, along a dirt road in Puerto Rico or between terminals during your connections? Does your bag have a retractable handle, optional shoulder strap and simple carrying handles? Do you need to be able to carry it as a backpack or is it expandable, so you can stuff it full of your purchases on your return flight, when you don't mind checking it in? Also be sure to check out the manufacturer's warranty—you might be pleasantly surprised by what is actually covered. There are so many options to choose from, don't be afraid to create a demanding list and start hunting for it. If all else fails and money is no object, you can always have a carry-on custom made just for you.

Safe travels! ▼

TUMI—Townhouse: a beautiful, tailored wheeled bag that has many interior compartments and interior garment sleeve. A whole series with matching satchels, messenger bags and other storage bags are available. With TUMI's reputation, you know this bag will last a long time.

Samsonite—Hardside Upright: available in a couple of sizes, these pieces are constructed from a new, exclusive CURV® composite material, which makes it the lightest and strongest luggage Samsonite has ever made.

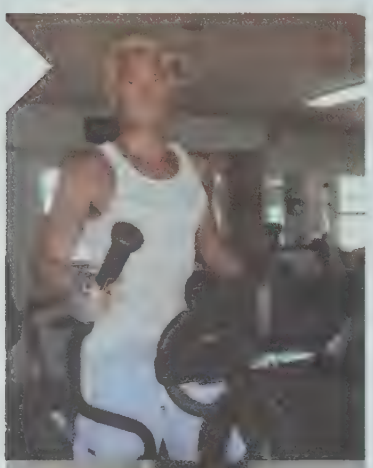
Louis Vuitton EOLE 50: in the classic, monogram canvas, this duffel-style bag has an extendable handle hidden behind a zippered flap and discrete wheels. Every time I take it on a trip I am always asked how I like it. I picked mine up in France last year and love its versatility.

Gucci: Leather trolley with retractable handle, and exterior zipped pocket. This bag in their "chocolate Guccissima leather" with chocolate leather trim and silver hardware is so yummy looking it's almost edible!

Porsche Design—Trolley 550G: a beautiful, contemporary black leather wheeled bag. This spectacular suitcase is amazing easy to maneuver and an integrated aluminum plate protects the wheel housing. The 550G has a zipper around the entire perimeter that allows complete access to the main compartment, which has various clothing pockets and a removable clothing bag.

Victorinox—Trek Pack Plus is a wheeled backpack that can be carried by hand, on your back or rolled through an airport. Made of full-ballistic nylon, it has a swiveling handle, multiple compartments and an additional day bag that attaches to the main case. This is a great, versatile, no-nonsense piece of luggage.

Fitness Seasonal Transitions



Well, it's that time again where many of us who enjoy our outdoor activities, from tennis to rollerblading, need to think about reintroducing a consistent indoor exercise routine. Consider this a cross-over plan. Let's face it, summer is gone and snow is just around the corner—if not already on your doorstep. Now is the time not only to combine your outdoor activities with an indoor workout routine but to step it up a notch, preparing ourselves for the inevitability of winter.

The fall still holds some great days to play tennis, rollerblade, cycle or run through the park, so make the most of it! These activities can represent your aerobic or anaerobic requirements while a routine at the gym can be the dawn of a planned strength training routine. Keep in mind that the transition from aerobic activity to anaerobic activity is considered a transition in the body's metabolism—depending on your exercise intensity.

You should be able to perform aerobic exercise for longer periods of time [than anaerobic]. This type of cardio activity is a sustained caloric burn—also called a fat burn. Jogging and using the cross-trainer at the gym are prime examples and as the weather gets increasingly cooler, we find the cross-trainer becomes a regular part of the workout routine.

Anaerobic activity is a more intense cardio activity requiring a higher and more immediate energy demand. This may eventually lead to fatigue. Racquetball and football are prime examples of anaerobic activities.

Eventually, the fall days become shorter and colder and our outdoor activities are restricted. Winter sports offer a respite from the indoors and we all know one must be in fairly good shape to participate in hockey, snowboarding and skiing. However, by the winter, we should be well into our new indoor workout routine.

I suggest scheduling your indoor weight training three to four days a week with one day on and one day off. Incorporate your fat burning or cardio activity either before or after training, perhaps rollerblading or an excellent run, as we may soon be more dependant on using cardio machines. Plan a program that will excite you, challenge you and improve your current physical level while also soliciting the help of a trainer from your gym. ▼

Here are some things to remember when starting or stepping up your fall transition workout:

- On the average, aerobic exercise conditions enable you to exercise for long periods of time. It takes thirty days to develop your fitness habits. Therefore, combining outdoor activities with increasingly frequent visits to your gym will begin the transition process for regular workouts.
- Set goals. Simply have an idea of what you eventually wish to achieve physically. For example, you may wish to reach a certain weight level or a new size for your jeans. Then, begin your fall transition program with that in mind. There is no rush so take your time and make it fun.
- The transition to a regular workout plan can be done with a partner. The social aspect of training with a friend can be very motivating providing you're both on a similar physical level. Everyone likes doing it with a partner now, don't they!
- Make small incremental adjustments to your workout weekly over the Fall season which will eventually bring you to your full routine.

As always, I recommend you consult a professional when planning a training program.

TRAINER TIP

Six ways to avoid fatigue to maximize your workouts.

1. Get a good quality sleep.
2. Plan a balanced nutritional diet ensuring the consumption of energy foods at least an hour prior to a workout.
3. Develop a training program and regular schedule doing your best to adhere to a routine.
4. When ill or recovering from a sickness avoid strenuous activity.
5. Make sure to have fun with your training. Perhaps use an MP3 to motivate and/or a fitness monitor that measures such things as distance travelled, pulse rates and even calories burned.
6. Finally, listen to your body and be careful not to over-train.

HOW WOULD I DO IT?

Welcome to my question and answer column where readers have asked me fitness-related questions. So how would I do it?

This months question is from Carl E. in Vancouver.

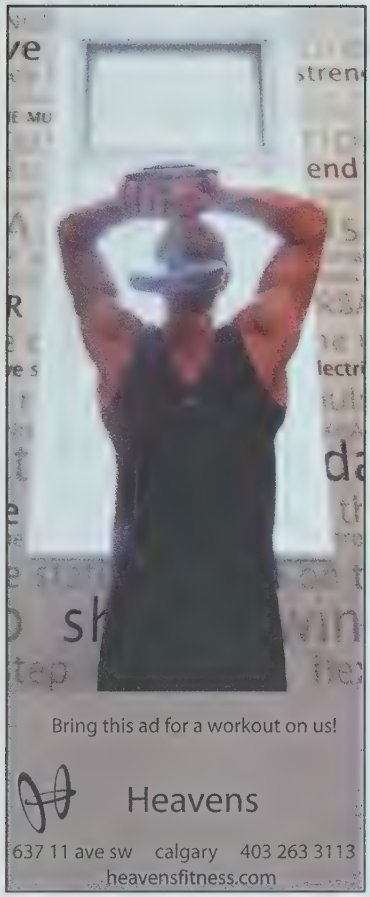
Ryan, what things should I look for when finding a personal trainer?

Here's what I would do:

When looking for a personal trainer, I would first ensure they are accredited and qualified as a personal trainer. Having BCRP and ACE certifications will give you an idea as to the type, quality and length of training the fitness professional possesses. Secondly, I would meet with the prospective trainer prior to any sessions and ensure you feel comfortable with their approach in helping you attain you fitness goals. They should be excellent listeners and positive motivators. Also, experience is always a plus. Find out the types of people they have trained and different success stories from former clients. A good trainer will also track, assess and modify your sessions as required. Finally, a good trainer will remain focused on you while training so that they can ensure you are performing the exercise properly and safely.

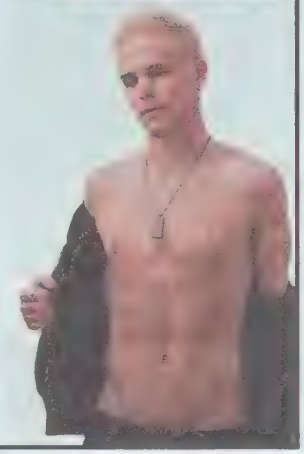
By Ryan Spring

Ryan is an (American Council on Exercise) ACE Fitness Personal Trainer. Visit Ryan at: ryanspringfitness.com



Don't You Wish

Born and raised in Saskatoon, this 21 year old Riders fan has now relocated in the heart of downtown Calgary, where he is a hardworking accountant. Jason enjoys spending time with his boyfriend, skydiving, spear fishing, and ripping it up out on the town every once in awhile. Currently located in Saskatoon to finish up his schooling, Jason can't wait to be back in the busy streets of Calgary's downtown to enjoy the shopping and nightlife. So look out for him on the dance floor at Twisted Element on weekends, but be careful, his boyfriend works there!



Jason

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Newfoundlander, Gemma Schlamp-Hickey, new national president of PFLAG Canada

PFLAG CANADA

The new president of the Executive Council of PFLAG Canada, Gemma Schlamp-Hickey of St. John's, Newfoundland, brings a wealth of experience to her new position. Shortly after graduating in 2003 from Memorial University (MUN), where she was the General Director of LBGT-MUN and president of the Religious Studies Society, Hickey created a project for Planned Parenthood designed as an outreach program for youth and their families dealing with sexual orientation and gender identity.

She was President of Egale from 2003 to 2007 and during that time helped to lead the campaign for equal marriage, and was on the advisory council and executive committee of Canadians for Equal Marriage. In her words, "I spearheaded the court challenge in my home province because I didn't want Newfoundland to be the last. Justice shouldn't have to wait. I wanted to put us on the map in terms of LBGT rights!"

As if those activities weren't enough, Hickey also ran twice as the NDP candidate in ridings in the St. John's region. Describing herself as a "recovering Catholic turned Protestant," Hickey serves on the Wesley United Church Council and is married to Wendolyn, "an unconventional Mennonite from Winnipeg."

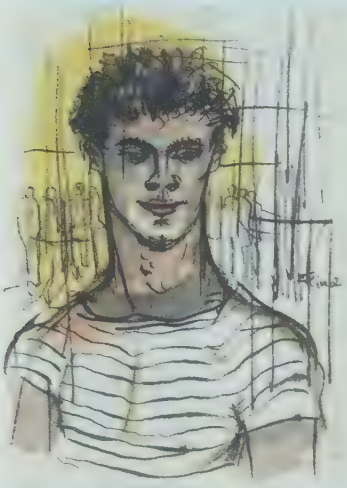
Currently, Hickey is on the board for the Newfoundland Human Rights Association, Chair of the AIDS Committee of Newfoundland and Chair of the Food Security Network of Newfoundland along with her new position as President of PFLAG.

Hickey believes that "PFLAG plays a very important role in the lives of Canadians by providing support, raising awareness through education and opening minds and hearts. I bring a passion for people and a vision for change to PFLAG. I have a lot of experience working for and with the LBGT community and it's a real honour to be a part of this wonderful team. " ▼

By Ralph Higgins.

Ralph is a writer, columnist and book/movie reviewer living in the Annapolis Valley of Nova Scotia.

Art Unleashed: The zeitgeist of Montreal's Peter Flinsch



It is almost unfathomable that one of Canada's gay pioneers was part of the Hitler Youth Movement—almost.

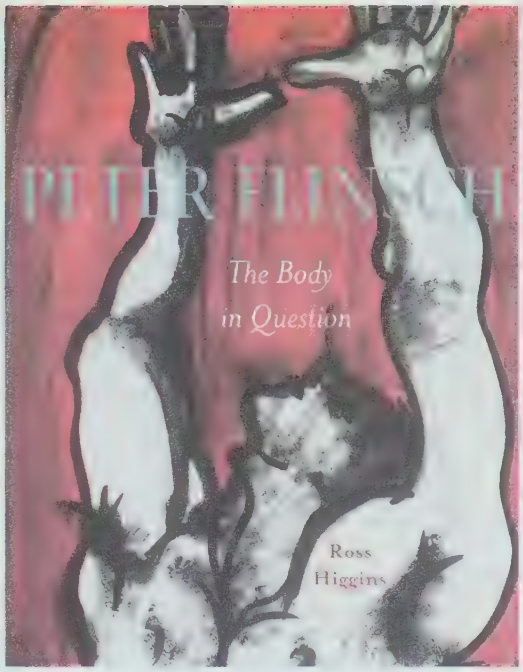
The bio of Montrealer Peter Flinsch reads like an epic novel; but its final chapter lies within a proud canon of artistic creation. After speaking at the recent Montreal book launch for Arsenal Pulp Press's *Peter Flinsch: The Body In Question*, author Ross Higgins (of Quebec's Gay and Lesbian Archives) reflects on his ongoing interest in Flinsch's life and art.

"I tried to choose a variety of styles for this collection," says Higgins, who spent the last couple of years prepping by pouring through a mountain of Flinsch's materials at his Montreal studio. "He's an extremely productive artist of many styles, and this book includes line drawings, pastels, some sculptures and oil paintings, and different schematics. He has a lot of very developed drawings of life in the Montreal village after 1980, with the capacity to memorize faces and cruising, all in sardonic and comic tones that simply can't be done in photography."

Flinsch's mastery in line technique developed from an early age in Leipzig, nurtured by an art-loving family that included prominent art historian and grandfather Ulrich Thieme, the celebrated founder of the Thieme-Becker Dictionary of Artists. As a boarding school student (and like so many of his classmates in 1938), Flinch was drafted into the anti-aircraft artillery of the Luftwaffe at the outbreak of WWII. In the blink of an eye, he saw the rise and fall of Berlin's queer heyday, an era of civilians soon branded in pink triangles under the Gestapo's Paragraph 175.

Himself caught in another man's embrace, a 22-year-old Flinsch confessed to it for mercy and was court-marshaled in 1942. Demoted, imprisoned, and placed in a disciplinary unit of minesweepers, the air force was his saving grace. Like so many around him, he may have later perished at locales like Stalingrad, had it not been for the non-fatal malaria that kept him in and out of hospital and on and off the battlefield.

Defying death, Flinsch truly learned how to celebrate life. He moved to Paris following the war, unleashing that creativity and soon moving on to Vancouver in the early 1950s, where he helped found the Vancouver Ballet. Designing everything from costumes and scenery to publicity displays, it wasn't long before he then set his sights on Radio-Canada television's debut as designer and art director. And, after a thirty-year career at CBC, it is Montreal where Flinsch, now 88, remains.



"Post-war and post-prison," says Higgins, "Canada was somewhat tame for Flinsch compared to Germany. Being oppressed by one of the most oppressive regimes of the 20th century gave him a wide perspective and productivity. After the 1960s, you can see how that builds, and by the 1970s, the floodgates were wide open. Along with dancers, he was also interested in athletes, and the Olympics are visibly a part of his sketches, including the Canadian swim team."

Being queer in the patriarchal, highly Catholic Québec during the 1950s wasn't exactly a gay pride parade. As Higgins notes, Radio-Canada itself was one of the first to exhibit Flinsch's more personal collections between their walls. And, over the course of an impressive career both inside and outside the CBC, Flinsch has exhibited across the US, England, France, Italy and his native Germany, as well as spending two seasons instructing Scenic Painting at National Theatre School. As Higgins adds, "Flinsch managed, while reflecting the early essence of the 'Montréalais' gay community we know today."

"His presence goes right back to the early days of the gay community in Canada," says Higgins. "He was well-tutored in art and language, spoke both French and English when he arrived, and was able to move through Montreal circles quite smoothly. As an anthropologist who has worked on the emergence of gay culture, I can say he was certainly a pioneer, and he didn't have a lot of company in what he was doing back then."

Flinsch's sharp eye is certainly found in Higgins' collection, which boasts over a hundred plates of Flinsch's material alongside Higgins' text. The seemingly random order of *The Body In Question* was no accident, but appear just as Higgins connected to them when he first saw them, and are surely apropos in celebrating Flinsch's nine lives.

Higgins is thrilled with the publication's quality and accessibility, hoping to continue his treasure hunting at Flinsch's studio in the future for more volumes.

"Flinsch is able to express his idea of a man," Higgins observes, "and of masculinity, in just a few simple lines. From the youngest period of his life, art was part of his world, trying different combinations of pastels with ink and new pens as they were invented. After choosing materials, we went through the media itself, and even the tiniest sketch has so much technique."

Peter Flinsch: The Body in Question by Ross Higgins is available through Arsenal Pulp Publications and Amazon.com. For more information on the artist, visit peterflinsch.com. ▼

By David King

David King is founding Artistic Director of Montreal's Out Productions (out.ca), a freelance arts, culture and travel writer, and Contributing Editor of 2B Magazine.

Rainbow Halifax

If Rainbow Halifax had a motto it might be: "Give us your queer and hungry travellers, your tired homos yearning for a B&B"—a slightly bent variation on some other famous words directed to new arrivals at another port city.

Visitors to the Rainbow Halifax site—a branch of Destination Halifax—are given information on food, entertainment, lodging and places of interest destined to make Nova Scotia's capital city a memorable stay for LGBT tourists and travellers. There are links for Pride celebrations, queer newspapers, bars and gay-friendly restaurants as well as festivals showcasing the blossoming east coast film, theatre and music scene. And, for queer couples who want to get hitched while in Halifax, there is information on legal requirements, where to get a license and costs involved, as well as some suggestions for venues for the wedding. Whether one is longing to tie the knot in a nautical style aboard a Tall Ship or have the ceremony solemnized by a minister, Rainbow Halifax will direct you to the appropriate contacts.

That Rainbow Halifax exists is testament to the increasingly strong alliance between the queer community and the business and tourist industries. Pink dollars have a strong presence here and business savvy combined with the well-known Maritime friendliness combine to make Halifax a prime destination for queer travellers. www.destinationhalifax.com/rainbow

By Ralph Higgins.

Ralph is a writer, columnist and book/movie reviewer living in the Annapolis Valley of Nova Scotia.

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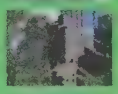

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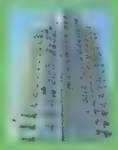

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Generation Q:

"Thoughts from the 21st Century Gay"

In What Kind of World Do I Want to Live?

It's now November and here we are-sandwiched in between the Canadian and American Thanksgiving and slipping closer into a new year. With politics growing more crucial, our global economy teetering and worldly affairs more volatile, I sometimes have a hard time casting a smile into the future. The systematic monetary corruptness of corporations that control our lives through the Federal Reserve, religion and politics sometimes leaves me devastated because I grew up believing that anything was possible and that this world could really be at peace one day. It seems only to get harder to climb out of this hole that is our monetary economy controlled by the rich few, because sometimes it's isolating to not ignore the depravity of our global status and still dream of ways to ascend.

History, especially the history of the Q community (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender folk), is peppered with the echoes of "defy the establishment". But these echoes only seem to vibrate in pop-culture bygones. We are a community who takes pride in pushing the limits, defying the status quo, and not allowing authorities to govern our lives through fear. The people who get rich while most get poorer are in the same vein as those who use war to strike fear into billions and use religion to turn society into sheep. These are all ways to control.

Things need to change. In March of 2008, TIME Magazine featured an article outlining ten ideas that are changing the world. The article discussed ideas of a global oneness in which we should all agree to acknowledge the dependency that all countries have on one another. This illusion of "us" and "them" will only further divide. We do need nations controlled by altruism not corporatism; nations that do not let fear govern their leaders and people. And, as history will attest, some of the boldest and bravest revolutionaries came from the Q community. It is the personal and collective history of gay people to dare to be different, not to sell out for a life of comfort, to fight for love and to insist equality for all.

> ... some of the boldest and bravest revolutionaries came from the Q community. It is the personal and collective history of gay people to dare to be different, not to sell out for a life of comfort, to fight for love and to insist equality for all.

Yes, it is now November. And as we find ourselves sandwiched in between thanksgivings and new beginnings let us first be thankful: thankful that, in our countries, we are not criminalized for being gay; that, in our countries, there is access to knowledge, technology and self education; that, in our countries, we have ways to voice our concerns. And second, let us move from gratitude to resolve: resolve to be more mindful of how authorities use fear to control us; resolve to self educate through uncensored forms of media (the internet!); resolve to question everything we read and hear while educating others to do the same; and resolve to one day live on the margins, loudly and proudly, in solidarity with those who have no other choice.

p.s.

The motivation for this article came from years of struggling to understand poverty and religion, inequality and authoritative irresponsibility, compounded with several documentaries that I have seen in the past couple of years. Two can be found at **www.zeitgeistmovie.com**. These documentaries are extremely controversial and, while I have not adopted all ideas represented in these movies, I have used them as a catalyst for discovering deeper truths and am working through the topics cautiously and steadily. If anything, use them as a tool to question establishments in your own life and dare to use media like this to answer one of life's ultimate questions: "In what kind of world do I want to live?"

Progressively yours,

Brandon Rolph

Brandon Rolph is a 22 year-old activist, writer, student and performer living in Los Angeles.

Anti-Violence Demonstration

In response to Jordan Smith beating October 12

Vancouver Police Reps

Victim Aaron Webster's family

Chief Constable Jim Chu

John Boychuk

Mr & Ms Gay Vancouver

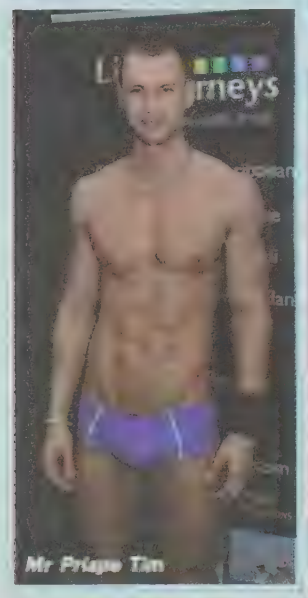
October 4 at the Odyssey

Outgoing Mr Gay

Emperor and Empress of Surrey

New Mr and Ms Gay

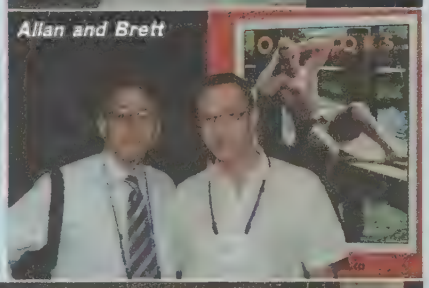
Planning an event in Vancouver? Contact Barry at 604.685.1377 and he'll see about covering it in Out & About. Photos by: Barry Piersdorff

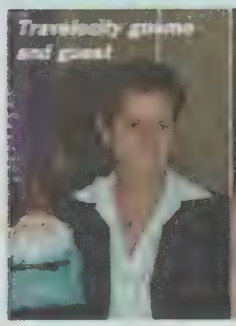

Mr Priapo Tan

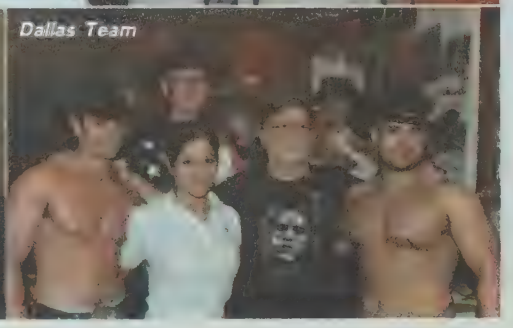
Travel Industry Trade Show

October 7 at Wall Centre

Westjet rep and Angus


Allan and Brett


Travelocity gnome and guest


Dallas Team

AIDS Walk

September 21 at Stanley Park

Hedy Fry

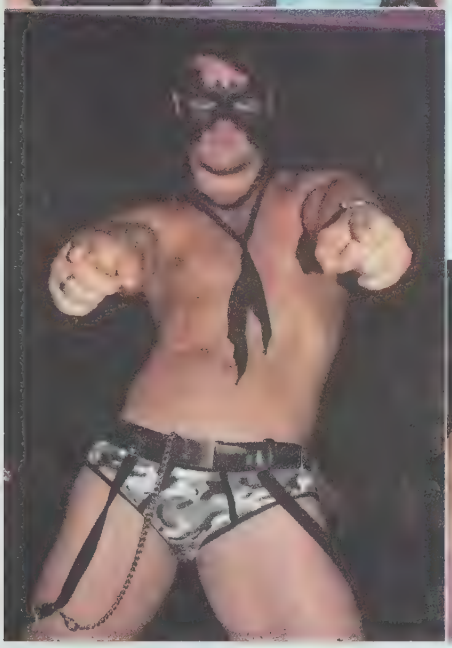
Ray Sunshine

Libby Davies

Provincial NDP Leader Carol James

BLACK & BLUE

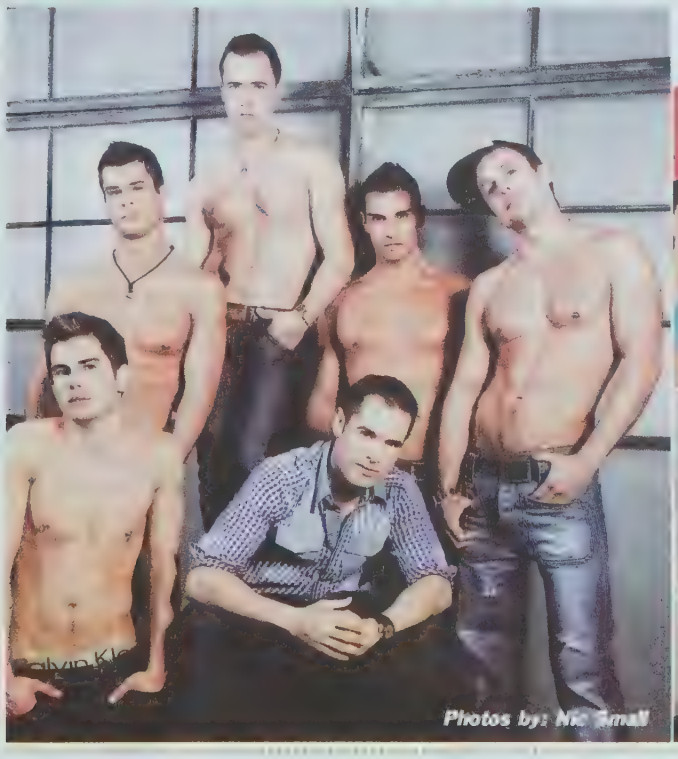
October 12 at Palais des Congrès



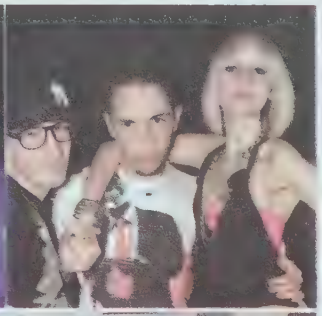
Black and Blue Photos: Erick Contreras

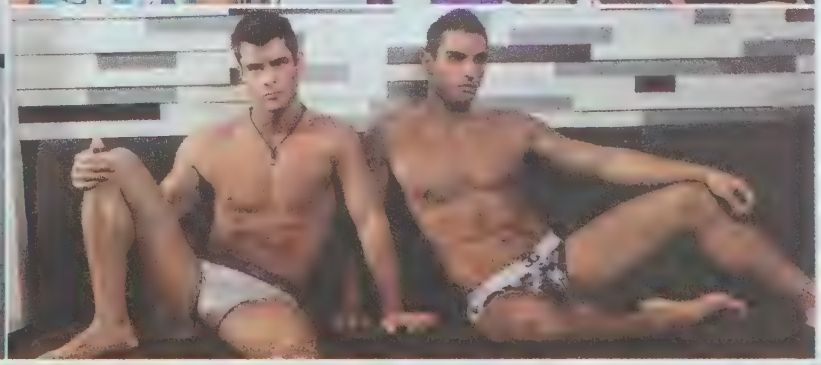
COVERguy: Montreal Edition Event Party

October 4 at Club Unity



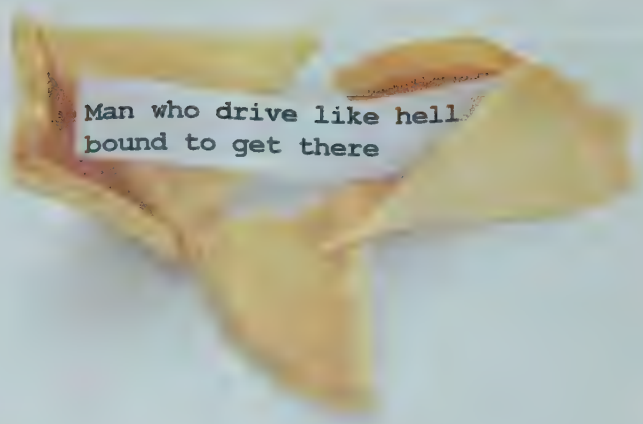
Photos by: Nic Small





November Horoscope

This November lucky Jupiter trines stern Saturn and gives us an extra push that insures our success. So don't sit on your stump. Get Out and do what you need to do!



ARIES (MARCH 21 - APRIL 20)

Proud Rams' great ideas hit their mark and give you an advantage with the mucky mucks. Say what's on your mind to both superiors and subordinates. (Be diplomatic...) Soon you can forget the day-to-day grind and concentrate on the bigger picture. Yes, long lunches and afternoon naps on your office couch.

TAURUS (APRIL 21 - MAY 21)

If great minds think alike, try to align yourself with great creative minds. Queer Bulls unleash their gay muse and create a masterpiece. Of course, if you fritter this energy on party pranks and cheap thrills you'll only have yourself to blame. Later in the month all those artistic ideas evaporate and you'll become just another cog in the corporate wheel. Axle grease anyone??

GEMINI (MAY 22 - JUNE 21)

Use November for quiet introspection and discussion between you and relatives. There are obviously problems in the past that are bubbling under the surface and need to be expressed before they erupt. Good. Pink Twins can do what they need to do to pave over disagreements and live life to the fullest. Don't kowtow to anyone. (Ha! As if you ever could!)

CANCER (JUNE 22 - JULY 23)

Jupiter trines Saturn and enables you to do the necessary fiscal research, focus your thoughts and create a compelling strategy. Good timing. Gay Crabs are angling for a fat wallet and a cushy financial pillow. Take time to study the small print though—there is time to fit the puzzle together later, but first you have to collect all the little pieces.

LEO (JULY 24 - AUGUST 23)

All other things being equal, you will be inordinately concerned and focused on your health and diet. Proud Lions want to slim down in time for the holidays. Strike while the spirit and flesh are both willing. At the same time you find ingenious ways to enjoy life and lust to the fullest without the extra calories. As you well know, sugar is better spread than eaten.

VIRGO (AUGUST 24 - SEPTEMBER 23)

With your active mind, incredible thoughts and insights come fast and furious to you this November. Queer Virgins may have trouble focusing on one particular topic for an extended period, but who cares? The idea is to accumulate all sorts of seemingly useless and frivolous ideas. You will be amazed on how you can build on these snippets and create a master plan.

LIBRA (SEPTEMBER 24 - OCTOBER 23)

Proud Libras love what they have to say but have an audience of one to judge. Be politic if you can around family. Anything you let drop will create a sinkhole... or is it stink hole? Secrets are exposed and so are you. But this may not be a bad thing. Oftentimes vulnerability is attractive and sexy. I guess you will find out if this is one of those times.

SCORPIO (OCTOBER 24 - NOVEMBER 22)

Queer Scorps will feel like a chameleon trying on different personal styles to see which one fits just right. Take heart, dear queer soul, you crawl before you walk; this particular regeneration takes several tries before the true lavender you emerges. In the meantime, seek affirming social groups and test some opinions. But don't go for consensus. Test the limits to get a true read.

SAGITTARIUS (NOVEMBER 23 - DECEMBER 22)

What is the best way to harness and guide your professional success? Those gay Archers who have been working hard will reap their rewards. Those who have slid by on their oily charm may have a second chance to prove themselves. Who knows? By mid-month you could be the main corporate flavor. Let's hope it is not roasted turkey.

CAPRICORN (DECEMBER 23 - JANUARY 20)

If you're conjuring a vacation, try to plan something extraordinary and life changing this November. Pink Caps need a bit of zest and can put the zip back into their current life course or find even greener pastures to explore. Viva la difference! Not only can you discover new things about yourself, you can also find some new and exciting travel mates.

AQUARIUS (JANUARY 21 - FEBRUARY 19)

Paging Dr. Freud: Aqueerians are in need of a consult. What is it that is holding you back from true affirmation and happiness? You have no excuse. Use November to liberate your mind and body. Make the most of it. Eventually, you'll tire of staring into your navel and seek to stare into someone else's navel. Of course, as Freud said, sometimes a navel is just an orange.

PISCES (FEBRUARY 20 - MARCH 20)

Guppies are more focused than usual on partnership issues this November. Play your hand while Jupiter trines Saturn and puts the spark back into partnerships. Put your cards on the table and see how the points add up. By Thanksgiving you can lustily trump your partner's ace and win the trick. (Don't be a dummy—I suggest that some Fish should go for the rubber.)

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Lichtenstein's blog www.thestarryeye.typepad.com covers everything new age. Her astrology book *HerScopes: A Guide To Astrology For Lesbians* is an international sensation. Buy it and feel the vibration.

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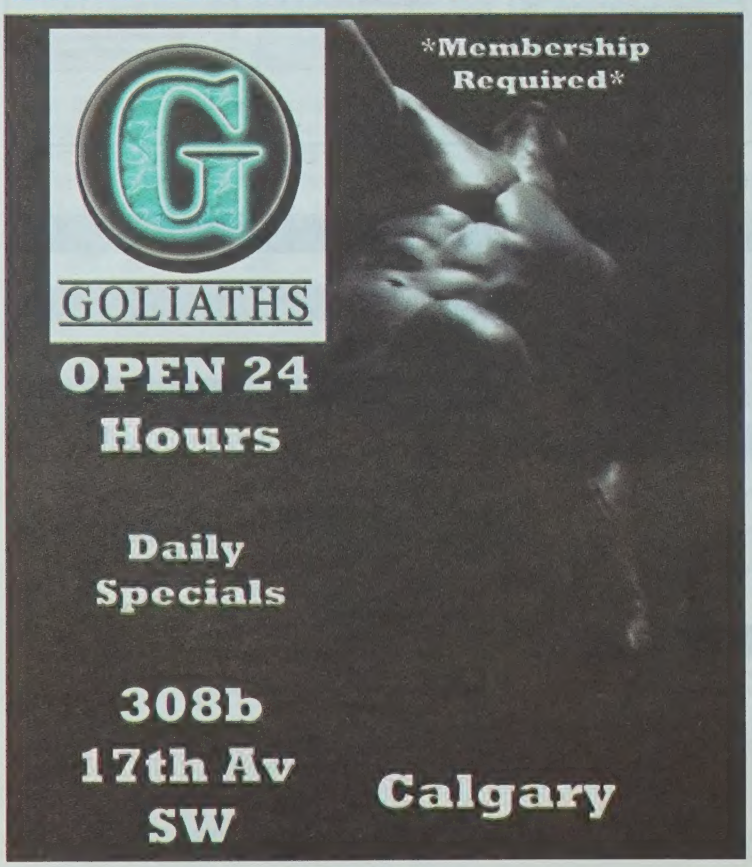
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Argentina

Will she be rolling down the river?

Twisted Element turns 4 years old!

May not seem like a big year to turn, but think of where it all started and where it is now. Over the years and through economic turmoil, this night club has survived through it all. Visitors from the entire world such as: U.S.A, France and even Amsterdam, to name but a few, have praised that they love the atmosphere and clientele! I think sometimes most locals take for granted. One gentleman from Montreal quoted "...Wow what an awesome place. The sound system and look of this place is simply wicked! The people here are so friendly too." Needless to say we do have a gem here in Calgary.

Twisted Element is welcoming everyone to join their birthday celebration on Sunday November 9, 2008. Come down and enjoy the celebration, prizes and performances!

Twisted Cares

Over the years Twisted Element has been going above and beyond in supporting the community. From charity events and auctions, to donating money to support local community's, Twisted Element doesn't seem to be backing down from these charitable actions. Last year Twisted Element donated $10,000.00 to the Sharpe foundation - in support of people living with HIV / AIDS. Owners of Twisted Element say, "...you need to help build a stronger community...we are doing our part." Rumor has it that something big will happen this year!
Could this be true?

Supporting the Arts

Twisted Element was honoured a few months as a huge sponsor to Sage Theatre. Twisted Element, donated $5,000.00 to Sage Theatre to support their upcoming productions. Twisted commented on their donation, "We support the arts and our community."

Rumour Mill!

EXCLUSIVE

There have been rumours about Twisted doing a $100,000.00 in Renos coming soon?

People heard about another donation to AIDS foundations?

Selma Body has a new HAIR WEAVE?

Stay Tuned!!!

RMG has been serving us up his beats every Friday night in the Twisted Element Lounge.
Did you know that he has been doing this every Friday night for 1 year now! Twisted Element wanted to give him the perfect b-day gift - a $10,000 sound system! Listen to his sexy soulful house every Friday and now Saturday nights in the Twisted Lounge.

Happy Birthday, Mama Kim

Mama Kim's Variety Show, is 1 year old! This show provides a venue for new and upcoming talent. What a smash hit! Watch Mama Kim do her magic with all her special guests every Saturday night at 10pm (drag time) in the Twisted Element Lounge.

BIANCA LABOUCHE

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ARRESTED FOR ILLEGAL ORGAN TRADE?

Homosexuality and Education

On November 6, Twisted Element will be sponsoring a seminar on how homosexuality is addressed in local education systems. Hosted by our very own RJ, the session will take you through a screening of FOR THE BIBLE TELLS ME SO, a documentary about homosexuality and Christianity and three speakers that will address these issues.
This event is free and will be held at Murray Fraser Hall, University of Calgary.

Missing Twink!!!

About 6 months ago Steve Dohn reported to police that his twink was allegedly missing. He filled out a missing persons report, stating that the last place he left him was in the cage at Twisted Element. Witnesses say that he with the help of another indiviual broke through the cage and destroyed it. Twisted Element won't comment on the event and have since then made substantial repairs with a new steel cage.

Advertising Feature